



Strings of Terror



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Chapter 1 by ParadoxalMirrors

She just can't fall asleep. "Simple," rationalizing aloud, she rocks back and forth on the blue plaid covers, arms wrapping about boney legs. Chin resting on her knees, she lets her eyes graze the room frantically, picking the darkness for the faintest of movements. "She can't catch you if you're wide awake,"

"That's how it works," her imaginary, top hat-wielding companion echos joyously. The petite woman sat, slightly transparent and warping the image of the stuffed cat at the foot of the bed, with her legs crossed and her head tilted towards the door, one nonexistent hand gripping the wrist of her more realistically-present human companion. Across the room, the lights beneath the crack of the doorway flickered from blue to white. Her parents were watching television in their bedroom, most likely. An unhealthy habit, but she could hardly complain; it provided light, after all.

"Lady," she whispered to the imaginary friend, already pointing to the door. 'Lady' might've been a strange name, but it suited the apparition's least obvious feature: her femaleness. "Check the hallway,"

"Ditto,"

Silently, the pale figure skips across the room, slipping through the wooden door without bothering to open it. The sinking, ghostly sight was unnerving, but the result was reassuring; Lady came back shrugging, shaking her head.

"Nothing?"

"Nothing," Lady nodded, face severe.

Leaning back against the pink pillows, she sighed, relieved. "Thank God,"

...and the strings of terror were finally broken.

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Chapter 2 by Ally Williams

From the strings of terror

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...and the young and damned
can achieve. Tell me you're young. It's nearly impossible to sleep in the middle of the night with

silver-tinted warning. Only the quiver in her voice betrays her fear.

"I cannot lie," Lady whispers quietly, though the sound fills the room. "You made it that way," Amily backed away from the door, sweaty back slamming against the railing of her bed frame. Her fingers grasped at anything--her worn striped tank-top, the stuffed purple hippo by her pillows, the silken material of her bed-shorts, the old and ragged spring-box mattress--nails clawing at different samples of fabric. Everything felt sticky; a heaviness that settled over her entire body with a finality she loathed.

"It's happening again," tears begin to well up in her eyes, blurring her vision. In a moment of blind panic, she slaps them away, heart leaping to her throat as one horrific thought hits her: They're waiting for your blindness. They're waiting.

"You know I don't have power here," Lady hums, the tones of her words faintly mimicking "London Bridge". "No power here, no power here,"

Slowly, painfully, the room began to warp. Twisting and churning, buckling against the strings of reality, clamping down onto the flesh of space and time as each and every hold on her sanity was snapped. The desk by the door melted in on itself, wood bubbling down in streams, burying brass handles and heart-shaped scratches made years ago.

"No power here," Lady continued to sing, but a glance told Amily that even she was falling. Well, it was more of a... sinking. Her slender, pale hands merged with the plaid covers, legs appearing to be welded to the sheets. Everything fell with the sickening sound of breaking bones and snapping tethers.

"No, no, no," the words echoed, and though she knew she'd thought them, it didn't feel as if she'd said them. They traveled about the room, taking the form of darkness.

"No power here," Lady sang, her voice drowned and gurgling as her head was submerged into the mass of boiling, formerly-solid room.

The last of the lights died with a slow 'thwum' before all sound faded.

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